

John Anderson

RECEIVED  
CALIFORNIA  
FISH AND GAME  
COMMISSION

2014 MAY -9 PM 1:57

MLS

Date: May 1, 2014

To: California Fish and Game Commission: Sonke Mastrup

Copies for Commissioners: Michael Sutton, Jack Baylis, Jim Kellogg, Richard Rogers, Jacque Hostler-Carmesin

Re: Late Season, Private Land Only Goose Hunting

Dear Fish and Game Commissioners,

As a waterfowl hunter and conservationist for nearly 50 years, I strongly urge you to discontinue the late season, private land hunts for whitefronted and white geese in the Northeastern Zone for several compelling reasons. As the retired chairman and commissioner for the Siskiyou County Fish and Game Commission, I worked tirelessly to protect and enhance waterfowl and hunting opportunities in the Klamath Basin and Shasta Valley for 16 years. The non-refuge, "private lands only" hunts for whitefront geese and white geese is harmful to hunting and waterfowl hunting in particular because it excludes a large segment of the hunter population from participating. It sets a bad precedence. In addition, it fails to accomplish US Department of Fish and Wildlife Pacific Flyway conservation goals for the whitefronted and white goose populations. The reasoning behind this change was poorly thought out and the results were discouraging. As a resident of this area, I can testify that very few people benefited from this change and many more were angered. Here are my observations and concerns.

1) Last season, the white goose season and the whitefronted goose seasons were significantly and hap hazardly shortened by the Fish and Game Commission on public refuge hunting areas, at the expense of the vast majority of the public land hunters. Then, the goose hunting days deleted for hunting for the general public, were added to an exclusive, late season hunt where only a select few hunters with money or privilege could hunt. Only elite hunters who bought hunting privileges on private property, including the expensive "for profit" guiding operations and exclusive land owners and there select friends, were able to hunt in this "late season" goose hunt; at the expense of the majority of waterfowl hunters. Consider that the regular waterfowl hunter that diligently purchased his hunting license and all the associated stamps and permits at considerable expense, was excluded from waterfowl hunting for a significant amount of time during the federal waterfowl hunting framework meant for everyone, so that a few elitist, wealthy hunters could have the only access to a truly public resource. This decision was wrong, insulting, harmful and I urge you to abandon this practice. Many of us that wanted to hunt were unable too because the private property owners were either hunting themselves, saving it for their "friends" to hunt, or they had sold the hunts to guiding operations. Our public

resources are not meant solely for the enjoyment of a small, wealthy, elitist group of waterfowl hunters, but are meant for all waterfowl hunters!

2) I read and understood the conservation objectives regarding this decision. I felt last year that the reasoning was flawed, poorly thought out and had no basis in fact, but to no avail. I do understand that white goose and whitefront goose populations are at an all time high and there is degradation on private farmlands as well as arctic nesting areas. I understood that in theory, allowing hunting on private lands surrounding the refuges, that the affects of degradation on private lands would be minimized by forcing the swarms of geese back on to the refuge. This reasoning is not valid for many reasons, but here are some important ones:

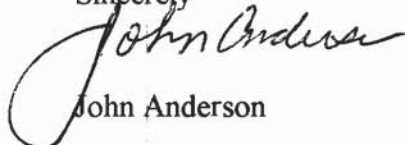
a. The northeastern zone is a high desert area and very cold. The time of year that the hunt was scheduled (February and early March) , it was still winter and no crops were even growing! There was no depravation then and the reasoning was not valid. It wasn't until the season was well over that the geese could posse a threat, which in my opinion is minor.

b. Land owners and guides put out decoys and lured the geese in their fields in large numbers so that they could charge money for hunting privileges. Again, there was no crop depravation because the growing season had not started and the objective by them was only to sell limited hunts to a privileged few or for the landowner and his friends to hunt at the expense of the majority of other hunters.

c. There was an economic loss when goose hunting days were taken away at the beginning of the season for white geese, only to be traded to the elite hunter at the end of the season. This resulted in many hunters staying home until the full season was open and an economic loss to local communities.

Recommendation: I strongly urge you to discontinue any type of hunt, particularly this private land hunt, that excludes a large portion of the hunting population from participating. Instead, I recommend that the whitefront goose and white goose seasons end on the last day available within the Federal Framework and encourage hunting on all lands, particularly refuge lands so that all hunters can participate. As a commissioner, I consistently voted to enhance hunter opportunity and always voted against exclusive hunting privileges by an elite few. Please provide the opportunity for all to enjoy.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John Anderson